DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 282 726 SE 048 149

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TITLE School Change through Transition Education Initiatives.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Developed Nations; *Educational Innovation; Educationally Disadvantaged; *Employment Potential; Foreign Countries; *High Risk Students; National Programs; *Special Programs; Student Motivation; Teacher Student Relationship; *Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews transition education initiatives that were undertaken in three Australian states (Western Australia, South Australia, and Victoria) for the purpose of assessing the extent to which local projects reflected national policy objectives. Case studies for each of the three states are presented and the impacts of the transition education activities are discussed. It was found that positive outcomes included increased student self-esteem, the creation of viable alternative curricula for less academic students, improved student-teacher relationships, and acknowledgments for schools. Among the negative effects were workload and stress among teachers and jealousy and resentment among non-participant teachers. A limited impact of the transition projects was observed beyond the particular target group (students considered employment risks). Factors which appeared to facilitate wide-ranging changes affecting whole schools were the support of the school principal and senior staff, the availability of project coordinators and low staff turnover. Implications for school changes are discussed. (ML)

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SCHOOL CHANGE THROUGH TRANSITION EDUCATION INITIATIVES

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A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC. April 19 -24, 1987.

SE 048 149

BACKGROUND

High rates of youth unemployment have been a continuing feature of the Australian economy since 1975. At that time the rate increased from 4.2% to 10.1% of 15-19 year olds and by August 1979 there was an average unemployment rate of that group of 17% (Karmel, 1979). These figures are even more graphic when displayed for individual age levels:

Age	Unemployment Rate (%)
15	27.2
16	26.3
17	18.8
18	14.3
19	12.7

Table 1: Unemployment Rates by Age, Australia August 1979.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *The Labour Force* quoted in Karmel (1979).

The importance of employment to young people should not be underestimated. Davis (1983) has argued that work had traditionally acted as the main "rite of passage" for young people into adulthood. De Cort (1985) has pointed out than an important part of the identity of young people is tied up with their work. Watkins (1986) has described the outcomes of lengthy periods of unemployment for young people:

> *The all-embracing term, alienation, is used to cover a wide range of negative attitudes arising from this lengthy period of dependency. These may range from outright hostility and disruptive actions, to a more passive dissatisfaction and lack of interest, or to privacy and dropout. Even for many able students, it emerges as a determination to play the game by the defined rules, but to see that game as irrelevant to genuine concerns.*

The response of the Australian government to this situation was in three phases (Dwyer, Wilson and Woock, 1984):

1. *Officially endorsed enquiries and reports on school-work transition.*
2. *Limited programs directed at unemployed young people.*
3. *Transition education funding which extended transition programs to students still at school.* (p.112.)

The paper is concerned specifically with the third phase in the extension of transition initiatives to secondary schooling. The phase was officially announced by the Federal Minister for Education on 22 November 1979 when it was pointed out that the purpose of the policy initiative was to ensure that (Carrick, 1979):

> *...ultimately all young people in the 15-19 age group would be provided with options in education, training and employment, or any combination of these, either part-time or full-time, so that unemployment becomes the least acceptable alternative.*

The announcement was supported with an immediate grant of $25 million for the following year with a further promise of $150 million over the next five years. The funds were made available to states and territories so that the program could be administered at the local level.

The character of the program was changed somewhat with the election of a new government in 1983. In 1984, the Participation and Equity Program (PEP) subsumed the Transition Education Program. Where the latter had focussed on students "at risk" in terms of work prospects, the former was designed to confront wider educational issues. It sought to be a more adequate representation of several groups which traditionally have been under-represented in this area of education. Although the rhetoric of PEP was broader than that of Transition Education, it is important to note that in some states identical initiatives were funded under the auspices of the different programs. Indeed, an implicit goal of both programs was reform of the senior secondary curriculum. This came to be seen as the means by which both sets of program objectives could be achieved. In this sense transition education initiatives paved the way for subsequent PEP initiatives. The process of reform started in 1979 and has continued even though the focus of the new program has substantially changed.

As promising as the initiative sounds, there have been strong warnings issued about the fate of central policy initiatives. Kennedy and Smith (1986) have noted:

> *...there is always the potential that policy intentions will be distorted and adapted as implementation realities impact on individuals and organisations. It does not seem to matter how worthwhile or beneficial a particular policy is, it can rarely escape the ravages of implementation.* (p.22)

There is now a considerable body of empirical evidence that highlights the crucial role of implementation in assessing the effectiveness of policy initiatives. A seminal study was conducted by Berman and McLaughlin (1978) in relation to US federal goverament education policies in the areas of reading education, vocational education and bilingual education. They identified a process of "mutual adaptation" in which general policy intentions were ignored with little more than lip service being paid to them. In all cases, however, federal government funds were used to support a wide range of local variations that had been identified.

In Australia, a study of one aspect of the Federal government's multicultural education policy indicated that local level decision-making played a crucial role in determining the form that multicultural education would take (Kennedy, 1985). Funds were often used for quite divergent purposes and there was not always agreement within schools on the nature and purpose of multicultural education. It seemed clear that Federal funds were being used not so much to support Federal objectives as the local variations of those objectives. Such variations may be quite legitimate but what is needed is a process that will ensure both Federal and local objectives can be met, and this includes those at state, regional and school level.

It should not be thought that education is the only human service area that suffers from implementation problems. Berman (1978) has shown that, in areas as diverse as employment and economic development, housing, urban renewal, environmental regulation and mental health services, implementation issues loom large. The reasons are not difficult to identify for, as McLaughlin (1983) has pointed out, implementation is a multi-level, multi-informant process that involves a range of actors at different levels and with differing degrees of commitment.

THE STUDY

Purpose

Given that policy objectives may not be implemented as they were intended to be, the purpose of this paper is to review transition education initiatives that were undertaken in three Australian states, (namely Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria), in order to assess the extent to which local projects reflected national policy objectives. The importance of this task has been highlighted by recent criticism of transition initiatives (Kemmis, Cole and Suggett, 1983). In particular, their relevance has been questioned given the more central task of reforming the structure of schooling for all students. It seems important, then, to have a clear understanding of exactly what the Transition Education Program was in practice if any assessment is to be made of its contribution not only to policy objectives but also to more general educational objectives.

Of particular educational interest as the extent to which particular transition education projects led to changes in school organisation, administrative structures and curricula; the role of key people (e.g. the school principal) and other factors in the school environment which facilitated or impeded change; examples of where activities were able to continue to become part of the normal life of the school after transition funding had ceased; and the extent to which transition education activities were separate or integrated into the school's overall curriculum. These were seen to be significant indicators of long-lasting curriculum reform.

Methodology

Each state was responsible for preparing descriptive accounts and historical records of unique projects stimulated or extended under the Transition Education Program (for example, Fraser, 1986; McNider and Hansen, 1985, Kemmis, Dawkins, Brown, Cramer and Reilly, 1983). The present study sought to synthesise local studies in order to provide a national picture of program implementation. This involved drawing together common themes and issues across studies, highlighting unique features of local programs, and identifying factors that influenced successful initiatives. While it was recognised that the process of synthesis might mask significant aspects of particular initiatives, it was felt to be a useful way to portray the characteristics of the Transition Education Program as a national initiative. It should also be noted that for the purpose of this paper, only brief accounts of each initiative are provided. Fuller accounts are referred to throughout the paper.

DESCRIPTION OF A SAMPLE OF INITIATIVES IN EACH STATE

A. Western Australia

Three transition projects were selected for study from a list of approximately 15 to 18 projects. The larger list consisted of projects which had been selected by staff of the Transition Education Unit in Western Australia as ones which had some successful and noteworthy features that would be worth documenting through case studies for the benefit of others. The three case studies were chosen from the larger set according to the personal preferences of the case study workers. There also was an attempt to provide some variety in the nature of the projects chosen and to include a school outside the metropolitan area of Perth. A full account of each case study can be found in Fraser (1986). What follows is a brief description of those case studies.

In one project (Kennedy and Patterson 1986) students spent part of the week doing core subjects and the rest of the time running small businesses called "Enterprise Education Units" which included catering, clerical services, furniture fabricating, managing a health studio and screen printing. Each unit was supervised by a teacher and generated income from the sale of goods and services. Students were given much responsibility to make decisions because the project aimed to provide an environment which promoted student independence and self-sufficiency. The project involved an innovative approach to the teaching of core subjects in which transition students covered three-fifths of the content of each core subject in regular classes and the other two-fifths as part of the Enterprise Education units. The school was unique in that processes for group decision-making were already in place at the time that the transition project was initiated. In contrast to most transition education projects in Western Australia which tended to cater for senior school students (typically Grade 11) this transition project involved Grade 10 students.

A second project (Hall and Watts 1986) studied a transition project intended for less academically able Grade 11 students. All transition students studied core subjects (communications, mathematics for living, industrial economics and technical drawing) and personal development subjects (cultural enrichment and living skills). The most distinctive feature of the program was the provision of vocational electives, some of which (advanced industrial arts, catering) were based at the high school. But the focal point of this transition project was undoubtedly the "link course", which refers to an arrangement by which some of the transition students spent part of the week at a neighbouring technical school attending specifically-designed trade courses in electronic, automotive, spray painting, metalwork and plastics areas. For many students and their parents, the link course was the highlight of their transition program because of its obvious vocational relevance (in terms of improving employability) and because the way that the technical school teachers treated the students was different from the way that they were treated at their high school.

The third project (Lake and Williamson 1986) involved a district high school (which covers primary school and Grades 8 to 10) in a small country town. This can be contrasted with the other two case studies involving senior high schools (which cover Grades 8 to 12) in the Perth metropolitan area. This "community-based" transition project is distinctive because the community was involved in the planning of the project and because it always was intended that ultimately the project would be moved to the community to become self-sustaining and provide local employment opportunities. Examples of the transition activities included school-based industries involving the production of printed tea towels and table cloths with Aboriginal motifs and the production of a variety of wooden toys. The production of tea towels was so successful that one design won a prize at a country fair and large numbers of orders were received from a wide area.

B. South Australia

The following twelve projects were identified within the Transition Education Program as being concerned specifically with curriculum change. Each project has been summarised and a fuller account can be found in McNider and Hansen (1985).

1. Three schools operated as part of a single project that focussed on structures (student subject choice, timetabling, systems of accreditation, etc.), content and methodology, new subjects and units of work. In one small school, this meant provision for the teaching of a language other than English through the sharing of resources with other similar schools in the area and making use of new communications technology. Another school generally broadened the scope of courses offered in the senior secondary curriculum with a special emphasis on catering for the students not bound for higher education. The third school undertook to make student choice the basis for subject offerings at the senior secondary level. A process for subject selection was established including opportunities for parent involvement and student counselling. The timetable was constructed on the basis of the choices made by students.

2. A whole-school review development and evaluation process was undertaken at one school. This involved a review of the Grade 11 curriculum, student counselling, parent involvement, and the development of units on careers' awareness for Grade 10 students. The result was a set of recommendations that would guide course development for Grade 11 students in the following year.

3. Another school aimed to provide a better balance of curriculum offerings for all students. This involved structural changes such as a more flexible timetable, wider subject options for senior students, and a single sex Grade 9 mathematics class. There was a special emphasis on curriculum subjects such as Media and Legal Studies, Accounting and an extension of Business Studies.

4. Greater curriculum flexibility for the whole school was the focus of another project. An integrated system of ten week modules was adopted to greatly expand electives in the senior years. Student choice was one of the priorities for determining course offerings and team teaching was encouraged. This involved the writing of new courses as well as the modification of existing courses. In addition, outcomes included the development of a philosophical statement that could be used as a base for all senior school courses, guidelines for the induction and evaluation of new staff, an increased interest on the part of staff in using out-of-school resources, the production of a number of position papers designed to stimulate discussion by the school community and an increased awareness of the needs of girls. Students were also supported in additional ways but largely through the setting up of TAFE link courses and the introduction of new courses.

5. The two main outcomes of another project were the development of a school policy on mature-aged students and the design of a course in Personal Development to meet the needs of girls.

6. Secondary school subject organisation was changed in one school along with the introduction of vertically grouped classes in Grades 11 and 12. The senior secondary retention rate also increased considerably.

7. Another school focussed on the development of life-style skills for students in order to improve decision-making, self-confidence, and self-esteem. This involved staff development and greater utilization of the community as a resource for the school.

8. The monitoring of the implementation of a ten-week module system was the focus of another project. Developed in the previous year, the system was systematically evaluated in its first year of implementation. This involved teacher education, identifying problems, student counselling, public relations with the school community, visiting other schools, and conducting a survey for additional subject needs.

9. Another effort focussed on senior secondary curriculum development targeted at students not intending to pursue an academic or specialist program in Grades 11 and 12. During this process a broad core of subjects was developed for junior secondary classes with some attempt to provide a choice of teaching methodologies within units. For post-compulsory students, a negotiated curriculum was put into operation. This allowed for the needs of individual students to be catered for in the most appropriate way.

10. Staff decided at another school to implement a modular system as part of their reform of curriculum offerings in the school. This enabled more student choice and involvement in course selection and the creation of valid combinations of units.

11. Another school sought to develop new courses in the humanities and mathematics with a special emphasis on the needs of transition students and girls. Coupled with this was a teacher development component that aimed to improve job satisfaction and student/teacher interaction.

12. An 'access course' was developed for students who had previously shown serious learning difficulties prior to Grade 10. This consisted of a core of English and Mathematics at two levels and a course in personal development spanning two years. Each unit consists of 50% access students with the other half from the mainstream. In addition there was a choice of three mainstream subjects and the negotiation of a contract in a particular area of interest to the student.

13. A total review of the senior secondary curriculum was the focus of another effort. A range of issues was identified as the basis for a major change effort in the following year. These included curriculum offerings, timetable, semester units, compulsory subjects, education for girls, assessment, pastoral care, accreditation, and professional development.

14. Another school targeted curriculum offerings for students in Years 11 and 12. A survey was conducted in order to collect information that would enable a full consideration of course options to be made. In particular some emphasis was placed on the student questionnaire. As a result, new options were introduced for senior students and extensive modifications were made to some existing courses. Important links were also made with the vocational education sector.

C. Victoria

The research conducted in Victoria consisted of a set of twenty-four case studies known collectively as the *Transition Education Case Study Project* (Kemmis, Dawkins, Brown, Cramer and Reilly, 1983). Individually, each project selected for study was considered to be a potentially significant one which could suggest directions and practices and, collectively, the set of projects attempted to represent a range of the situations, client groups and educational strategies prevalent within the Victorian transition education program. The case studies were based on several research techniques including interviews, observations and document analysis. Access to the projects, the boundaries of each study, and the preparation and final release of the case study reports were all subject to "negotiation" between researchers and participants. The case studies deliberately recognised the perspectives of the project participants and were descriptive rather than recommendatory.

Because space does not permit detailed individual consideration of each of the twenty-four Victorian transition projects documented through case studies, the discussion below briefly considers selected projects in terms of the six foci for secondary school projects (as distinct from vocational education) identified by Kemmis et al. (1983). The six foci are (1) school-community linkages; (2) perspectives on work; (3) activity-based projects; (4) experience-based projects; (5) youth participation; and (6) equal opportunity projects.

1. **School-Community Linkages.** A number of transition projects forged links between schools and the community by providing services to the community. For example, students in one project provided tutoring services to local schools and kindergartens and helped to beautify parks (Brown, 1982, No.2). Another project, based in a school in the most densely populated suburb in Australia, involved students in providing a community theatre which took plays to schools and old people's homes (Reilly, 1982, No.9). In a somewhat similar vein, the community formed an audience for a transition project involving a student newspaper in an urban school (Wyn, 1983, No.13) and for another project involving FM radio transmission in a country school (Bartlett, 1983, No.14). Some of the aims for radio projects for students were effective communication, efficiency under pressure, compatability, compatibility with adults at the workface and organisational skills. In other projects, the community provided a source of knowledge or a place to test ideas, such as in a social science program consisting of research into social problems (Carozzi, 1983, No.21).

2. **Perspectives on Work.** Although few projects focused directly on vocational training, this emphasis was evident in transition projects for disadvantaged groups such as students in isolated rural areas (Dawkins, 1982, No.4) or students at Victoria's only detention centre for young women (Cramer, 1982, No.3). For example, students at the detention centre were exposed to excursions to sites, work experience and voluntary work observation to develop social skills and contacts with employers. But, overall, Kemmis et al. (1983, p.131) noted that the importance of work experience in Victorian transition education projects had declined over time and that, where work experience was involved, it typically was part of a school's general curriculum.

3. **Activity-Based Projects.** Some transition education projects consisted partly or wholly of discrete activity-based initiatives added to a school's curriculum and timetable. For example, in rural areas, activities such as horticulture were added to the dominant curriculum in order to broaden students' experiences (Cramer, 1982, No.8). For example, a transition project in a school situation 350 kilometres from Melbourne involved use of existing resources in the local area in a course on agriculture, horticulture and landscaping and another course on light industry and construction involving practical learning experiences in drafting, concreting, welding, metal crafts and painting (Maggs and McDonald, 1983, No.23). Such projects can give the student experience with self-management and problem-solving, but time constraints can mitigate against this in situations where the activities must fit a rigid school timetable.

1. **Experience-Based Projects.** The problem of time restraints imposed by the school timetable was avoided in some experience-based transition projects which involved students leaving the classroom or school to conduct manual or hands-on activities. For example, one highly successful project involved students in being out of class for part of the day to be involved in the reconstruction (under the direction of an architect) of the grounds of a school situated in one of the most multicultural and urban areas of Australia (Reilly, 1982, No.1). An important feature of this project within the school was its visibility which helped the project to have a pervasive impact on all teachers and students. Other examples of experience-based projects operating outside the constraints of the normal timetable have been mentioned previously; these include projects involving the production of a student newspaper (Wyn, 1983, No.13) and a community theatre (Reilly, 1982, No.9).

5. **Youth Participation.** Some transition education projects had as a major focus student involvement in decision making. For example, one project involved students in administering funds to support small-scale student initiatives (e.g. lighting and costumes for a school play, a clothes rack for a lost-property group, the setting up of a coffee shop) (Cramer, 1982, No.8). Such projects aspire not only to raise student motivation and self-esteem, but also to allow students to learn to exercise power responsibly. It is interesting to note, however, that higher achieving students (with greater literacy skills and personal confidence) seemed to dominate student involvement in governance according to Kemmis et al. (1983).

6. **Equal Opportunity Projects.** Several transition education projects have been aimed specifically at countering sexism (Reilly, 1982, No.7; Robinson and Dawson, 1983, No.7). Within these projects, curriculum materials might be revised to eliminate misrepresentation of women's roles, to give girls increased attention in situations where boys typically dominate and to promote among girls vocations which traditionally have been male-dominated.

   But it is somewhat ironic that the important issue of equal opportunity for girls seemed to be considered only in special projects for this purpose rather than being addressed in many of the transition education projects. For example, in an impressive project involving the reconstruction of a school's grounds, girls were somewhat discouraged from participation because boys tried to dominate the use of tools and made derogatory comments (Reilly, 1982, No.1).

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RESULTS FROM A SYNTHESIS OF THE LOCAL STUDIES

A major purpose of the Transition Program was to provide school experiences which would make more employable the students considered most likely to be unemployed on leaving school. Yet, the review of projects across states indicated that transition education projects had been used not only to improve the relevance of school for selected youth, but also to provide an important opportunity to make secondary education more effective for all students. As Kemmis, Dawkins, Brown, Cramer and Reilly (1983, p.xvi) put it, the Transition Program aimed, first, *to serve students "at risk" by engaging their interests and concerns by making education more "meaningful", "relevant", "experience-based", "practical"...* and, second, *to provide an impetus for general curriculum reform which can prevent students being lost to education by proving its value to them.*

What started as a concern for disaffected youth became a concern for the quality of the curriculum provided for these students. A summary of project outcomes will help to demonstrate this point.

SOME OUTCOMES OF THE TRANSITION PROJECTS FOR THE TARGET GROUP

Before considering below some of the outcomes experienced by transition education students, it should be stressed that each transition project also provided students with a unique and worthwhile educational experience that was not available within the traditional curriculum (c.f., the "expressive" objectives advocated by Eisner, 1969). For example, at one school, transition students were afforded experiences in screen printing, working with adults in the community, visiting Perth, winning a prize at a state fair for a tea towel design, receiving and filling orders for their goods, interviewing for a television documentary (Lake and Williamson, 1986). Similarly, transition students at another school gained valuable experiences in fabricating furniture, screen printing, catering, clerical services and health studio activities, (Kennedy and Patterson, 1986), while students at yet another school were able to select options in areas including catering, plastics, welding, panelbeating (Hall and Watts, 1986). Although all the effects of these experiences on student outcomes are not discussed below (or even known, for that matter), the intrinsic value of these unique educational experiences should not be underestimated. What follows are the document themes identified across studies.

Consultation, Enjoyment and Other Student Outcomes

There seems to be evidence across states that students played a more central role in program design and implementation than is usually the case. In South Australia, for example, there was evidence of consultation with students both prior to and following project implementation. This did not apply to all projects but it did indicate that for some, at least, student needs were playing a central role. In Western Australia, teachers commented at one school that the transition education project had provided the first experience of success that some students had encountered in their whole school career. In Victoria, students involved in the community theatre project expressed satisfaction and indicated some growth in their personal and social development.

These are particularly interesting outcomes because of the nature of the target group which was described in policy terms as being "at risk" students. In Western Australia, they were described as "switched off" kids and less academically able students. Many of the Victorian projects catered for low achieving students. Thus it would seem that in many instances the projects were targetted at just the group for whom the policy was intended.

Associated with the widespread gains in students' self-esteem and enjoyment, there also was some evidence among students of improvements in initiative and confidence, ability to work co-operatively with others, pride in and a sense of ownership of the program, group cohesion and competence at communicating effectively with fellow students and teachers. These attributes were evident among students at each of the three sites. For example, in one school, many students reported that the transition project was the most interesting and useful aspect of their school week (Lake and Williamson, 1986). At another, it was not uncommon to find transition education students taking visitors on a tour of the school and describing the transition education activities in a confident and clear way (Kennedy and Patterson, 1986). In one Victorian school, teachers reported some growth in student co-operation, concentration and confidence (Reilly, 1982, No.1).

In policy terms, the Federal Government's Transition Program was intended to enhance the employment prospects of selected youth. Although the present study did not involve following up students after leaving school to check on the success in gaining employment, it seems highly likely that employability was enhanced through the transition projects. Transition students not only learned specific skills related to certain occupations, but also the notable changes in self-esteem, confidence and ability to work with others surely would serve students well in later life.

Although the value of the observed improvements in self-esteem among transition education students should not be underestimated, another question pertinent to the present study is the extent to which this success in promoting self-esteem was transferred outside the transition program. Consequently, a later section of this paper is devoted to whether the experiences and success in this area formed the basis for school-wide changes in organisation or teacher-student relationships which would enable a greater proportion of the school's population to experience these benefits.

Creation of Alternative Curricula

The Transition Program has helped to give status and legitimacy to educational alternatives and to teachers with a wish to provide alternative curricula. In particular, through the provision of funding and support, the Transition Education Program has given certain teachers an opportunity to cater for a specific group of students in creative and unique ways. In Western Australia, this involved an emphasis on activity-based learning linked in a relevant way to real-life situations. In South Australia, there were significant attempts to review the current curriculum and adapt it so it more readily met the needs of an expanding school population. The process often led to new curricula in a number of areas, including life-skills, humanities and mathematics, and personal development. In Victoria, a variety of attempts were made to ensure a more relevant curriculum: involving students in community theatre, the production of radio programs, horticulture courses for rural students, reconstruction of the school grounds, production of a student newspaper. In general, it seems, transition projects across states sought to restore some balance in the traditional curriculum which often seems to over-emphasise "book learning" and the mental as distinct from the manual.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Across studies there were some notable accomplishments in terms of the quality of teacher-student relationships. In one Western Australian project, students preferred the way the teachers acted more as supervisors (as in the work situation) than as teachers in the traditional sense; in particular students seemed to appreciate the opportunities for self-direction (Kennedy and Patterson, 1986). In Victoria, students in the community theatre project expressed special satisfaction with their relationship with their teacher. A typical comment from one student was:

> *He's just like part of us. I don't see him as a teacher...I'm not scared to talk to him. He gets involved with the kids. I've never felt I could talk to teachers seriously.* (Reilly, 1982, No.9, p.39.)

Workload and Stress Among Teachers

Several studies of teachers engaged as school-based innovators under the auspices of the Commonwealth Schools Commission Innovation Program have shown how attempts at school change typically are associated with an increase in teachers' workloads and a degree of anxiety and stress (Foyster, 1979; Malcom and Owen, 1982; Fraser and Edwards, 1982.) It appears in selected projects within states. In South Australia, there was evidence of stress and overload in several projects - sometimes this was because of unrealistic timelines and at others because of structural problems within the school. In Western Australia, similar problems were also identified by teachers. At the same time there were also glimpses of feelings of exhilaration and job satisfaction. It is probably not unrealistic to expect these extremes during the implementation of innovation where dreams and ambitions clash with the everyday reality of schools.

Another aspect of teacher stress had to do with the resistance that was encountered from some members of staff. It seems from projects in both Western Australia and South Australia that innovation generates its opponents as well as it supporters. This means that a good deal of energy has to be expanded on settling internal disputes so that the project can proceed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

Whereas the previous section considered some of the positive and negative effects of the three transition projects on the groups of participant students and teachers, the focus of this section is on the implications of these projects for school change. The first subsection below provides a contrast between add-on and whole-school transition projects, while the second subsection is devoted to factors which facilitate or impede school change.

Add-on Versus Whole-School Projects

Many of the studies reviewed provided clear evidence of the favourable impact of the transition project on needy students in terms of self-esteem, teacher-student relationships, etc. An important additional question that was considered involved the extent to which the projects led to changes which affected the school as a whole and benefitted large numbers of students and teachers. There was no single trend identified across states.

The transition project at one Western Australian school, (Lake and Williamson, 1986), appears to have had limited impact at the whole-school level. First, the project was constrained to a very small group of students (especially girls and Aborigines) and teachers. Second, the proposal all along was to establish a school-based activity which eventually would be transferred to the town as a self-supporting and employment-generating enterprise. Thirdly, a degree of tension surrounded the project and there was resentment among some non-participant teachers. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that some of the successful aspects of the alternative curriculum have not been incorporated into the mainstream school offerings and organisation so that a large proportion of students in the school might experience the benefits (e.g. self-esteem) encountered by transition education students.

Yet another school in the same state (Kennedy and Patterson, 1986) provided the best example of whole-school impact. First, because planning of the transition project involved all teachers in the school and there were project co-ordinators with responsibility for maintaining liaison with staff throughout the implementation of the project, the staff as a whole felt some ownership of the transition project. Second, a deliberate attempt was made to locate the business enterprises on the school school premises and to make transition education an integral part of the school. Third, the transition project involved a basic questioning of the value of the traditional academic curriculum and an attempt to change the curriculum in quite fundamental ways. Fourth, the transition project attracted students from outside the "at risk" category.

One of the interesting changes that the school's principal made at the end of 1983 was to reorganise the deputy principal's job so that she became the school's curriculum co-ordinator. This ensured that the innovation continued to receive both co-ordination and support at the senior staff level. This organisational change should do much to ensure successful continuation. Also, by having a curriculum co-ordinator responsible for all the school's curricular offerings, the opportunities for integrating transition education better into the school in the future are enhanced.

The school had a creative approach to time allocation for the four core subjects of mathematics, science, social studies and English. Only three of this school's usual five periods were devoted specifically to the teaching of each core subject, while the remaining time was made up by requiring that content from the core areas be included in the enterprise units. Despite the obvious merits of this innovative change in the traditional curriculum, time allocation to core subjects was a perennial problem among teachers at this school. A common view expressed by teachers was that the external credentialling agency in Western Australia (then called the Board of Secondary Education) would consider that the time devoted to core units was insufficient to allow recognition of students' passes in these core units for the purposes of certification. In fact, this important question was not pursued by teachers with the Board of Secondary Education at the time (although the BSE approved a mathematics course with four periods per week in the following year). Further misunderstanding was evident among some Year 11 teachers who advised transition education students at the end of Year 10 that they would be ineligible to study some Year 11 subjects because they had completed only

about three-fifths of the normal core subjects. As well, transition students reported that they felt under pressure in core subjects and that they were given additional homework to compensate for the fact that they had less periods per week than non-transition students.

Consequently, the case study provided an example of an area of lost opportunity to extend a significant innovation in the teaching of core subjects more widely throughout the whole school. Teachers clearly did not fully appreciate that transition education was covering content from core subjects and, in some ways, doing this better than through the conventional core subjects. Rather than attempting to use this creative way of teaching core subjects for the benefit of other students in the school, a move was made in 1984 to reduce the amount of core teaching done within the Enterprise Education units.

Clearly, a major orientation of Victorian transition projects was intended to be an emphasis on whole-school projects rather than add-on ones:

> *A central theme in the TEAC guidelines in Victoria is that a school-based program should have distinct implications for long-term curriculum review and development throughout the school, ultimately improving the nature and quality of the education available to all students in the school.* (Wilson, 1983, No.19, p.32.)

Although the community theatre project always *was intended as a vehicle of influencing staff teaching styles towards approaches that would employ more student experiences or tasks and the use of oral expression* (Reilly, 1982, No.9, p.38), only limited success has been achieved even in integrating theatre studies with the school's Grade 12 drama program. One isolated area of success, however, was the use of the community theatre's project officer in the oral expression component of Grade 10 English. *The containment of the Project as an experiment in new forms of education and social relations within the timetable and mainstream curriculum limited the impact of a more critical social development. Theatre Studies has not challenged the status or boundaries of the academic curriculum.* (p.57.)

The project involving reconstruction of a school's grounds had the merit that it was visible and therefore had a pervasive impact on most teachers and students. But, although it also was intended to affect the methods of teaching in the school, Reilly (1982, No.1, p.39), reports that there were *few tangible effects on the official curriculum.*

In a school whose transition education initiatives included a model office and horticulture, substantial resource allocation including time allowance to teachers was made by the school to ensure that the activities begun with special external funding could continue as a normal part of the school's curriculum (Cramer, 1982, No.8).

In one transition education project, a student newspaper had the status of an elective subject and therefore was *structurally contained and isolated from the rest of the school curriculum* (Wyn, 1983, No.13, p.20). But it had not been used as a way of integrating various traditional subjects in the curriculum.

If whole-school impact from an individual transition project is considered an important end result, then it could be useful to consider the content of the transition project in terms of its compatability with the traditional curriculum. For example, although alternative curricula provided great benefits for the small number of participant students, there was little motivation to incorporate these into the mainstream curriculum. The studies reviewed did not delve deeply into this interesting question, a fruitful direction for future research would be to investigate which types of alternative curriculum content are more suited to being incorporated into the mainstream curriculum.

Blakers (1985) noted that the Transition Program (and the Participation and Equity Program) in every State and Territory provided examples of successful attempts to cater for the needs of young people. Many of these attempts, however, have affected relatively few students and have had little impact more widely on the processes of schooling. In contrast, some evidence (e.g. in Victoria) of fundamental changes in structures and processes existed, but *it is in the step from marginal experiment to mainstream provision that the impediments to desirable change abound* (Blakers, 1985, p.108).

Kemmis, Cole and Suggett (1983) also claim that "add-on" transition programs are unlikely to lead to fundamental and widespread improvement in secondary education. *The long-term solution to the transition problem must be a transformation of schools as we know them, not a tinkering at the edges of our present structures* (Kemmis, Cole and Suggett, 1983, p.6). A most important point made by Kemmis and colleagues is that, although some schools began with add-on transition programs, these programs provided the stimulus and experience to prompt schools to look deeper into schooling for other wider-ranging educational provisions which would have a more fundamental impact on the school as a whole. Consequently, it would be a mistake to be too hasty in concluding that transition programs such as those depicted in the present case studies will not lead to broad school change some time in the future just because their short-term impact at the whole-school level has been limited to date.

Factors Affecting School Change

The aim of this section is to draw on the experience of the documented accounts of transition education projects in an attempt to identify factors which appear to have facilitated or impeded school change at these three sites.

Support of Principal and Other Senior Staff: In a recent paper entitled *The Supportiveness of the Principal in School-Based Curriculum Development* (Brady, 1985), evidence from an Australian study clearly established the central influence of school principals on curriculum initiatives in their schools. The vital role of the principal in shaping the nature and success of attempts at school change is well recognised in the curriculum literature (e.g. Lieberman, 1973; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 1982). The crucial role of the principal and other senior staff was acknowledged in the majority of the transition projects as they were initiated, implemented and continued. For example, Kennedy and Patterson's (1986) case study showed how the principal regularly praised the transition project and encouraged visitors to the school to view the project. It was likely that this supportiveness from the school principal and other

senior staff was a major factor contributing to the success of the project. Lake and Williamson (1986) claimed that it is unlikely that the project they reviewed would have existed without the drive and enthusiasm of the principal, who also was the initiator of the project. Moreover, the principal's absence or reduced involvement in subsequent years appears to have been associated with a marked reduction in the benefits experienced by transition education students relative to the first group of students. Similar examples could be cited from other states.

Support from the System: Fullan (1982) claimed that the successful continuation of an educational innovation also depends on the support of "systems level managers". In the context of the present projects, these system level people either held senior appointments with the State Education Department, either at head office of in a regional office, of were part of the Education Department's Transition Education Unit. In the documentation reviewed for this study, there was much support given by senior Education Department staff and Transition Education Unit staff. In the case of the South Australian project, for example, specific support structures were set up to facilitate project implementation.

External Financial Support: One of the most fundamental questions about any externally funded program is whether projects can be maintained after the end of the funding period. That is, from the perspective of wide-ranging school change, it is important that worthwhile new educational offerings become incorporated as a normal part of the school's curriculum rather than simply existing temporarily only while external funds exist. All studies reviewed for the present research suggest that it is likely that success depended in part on the existence of external funds made available by the Federal Government through its Transition Program. In comparison with conventional programs, transition projects were able to operate with smaller teacher-student ratios, to have the benefit of extra staff in some instances and to have greater opportunities to purchase equipment and materials. In judging the success of transition education initiatives, relative to traditional curriculum offerings, it should be appreciated that some of the observed benefits could be attributable to the small class sizes or the availability of extra staff per se rather than to other features of the transition curricula.

Availability of Co-ordinators: In a report aptly entitled *Catalyst Among the Pidgeons*, a group of people involved in the Participation and Equity Program in schools in the Maroondah region of Victoria have described the advantages in school change attempts of having "project officers: with substantially more unstructured time than the typical teacher (Participation and Equity Program Committee, 1984). It was found that effective school innovations require much time to organise and that the fullness and inflexibility of the teacher's day make it very difficult for teachers to co-ordinate projects. On the other hand, the use of project officers made it so much easier to maintain adequate contact with teachers, students and the school administration and establish contacts outside the school. Similarly, in the Participation and Equity Program in South Australia, the availability of project co-ordinators (say on a basis of full-time for a year or half-time for one or two school terms) seems to be a factor which facilitated school change efforts (MacNider and Hansen, 1985).

Hall and Watts (1986) case study clearly illustrates the positive influence of the transition project co-ordinator. The transition project described by Kennedy and Patterson also provides a good example of how a project benefitted from having project co-ordinators. Both co-ordinators were teachers at the school and each had been a member of the project's original planning team. One co-ordinator had the tasks of trouble-shooting (being on the look-out for potential problems), negotiating (making sure that teachers were covering the core content in the enterprise units) and supervising (making sure that responsibilities delegated to others were met). The other co-ordinator played a public relations role in that she went around the school to make sure that everyone understood what was going on and to listen to problems and concerns among staff and students. Above all, these co-ordinators were sensitive to people's feelings and had skills in dealing with people. The present case studies, therefore, provide some evidence that school change is facilitated by the availability of project co-ordinators with time available to devote solely to the educational change attempt.

Jealousy and Resentment Among Non-Participant Teachers: A study of school-level innovations in Australia revealed that jealousy and resentment is not uncommon among teachers not involved in an innovation operating in their school (Fraser and Nash, 1981a, b). For example, Brady (1979) describes an innovative project which was successful in the eyes of participant students and their parents, but received much resistance from non-participant teachers and parents of non-participant students. Brady concluded that this innovation failed to reach its potential and to become an established ongoing part of the school program mainly because those involved in the innovation had not appreciated the need for communication and consultation with other teachers in the school not directly involved in the innovation.

Lake and Williamson's (1986) case study provides a clear example of a transition project which created jealousy and resentment among non-participant teachers and some community members (c.f., reference to the school as the "tea towel factory"). This situation seemed to be exacerbated by the fact that transition teachers and students enjoyed additional facilities and materials which the rest of the school without outside resources didn't have. Moreover, the principal was the driving force behind the project and appeared to give greater kudos to transition education than to what other teachers in the school were doing. The seriousness of this problem is highlighted by the way that the Parents and Citizens Association passed a vote of no confidence in the principal, although this was later rescinded.

Furthermore, it appears that these tensions in 1982 led to a deliberate attempt to reduce the prominence of and attention to transition education at a Western Australian school in subsequent years (Lake and Williamson, 1986). While this was accompanied by a reduction in tensions among teachers and a general acceptance of transition education in the school community, paradoxically, the benefits evident among transition students in 1982 were not replicated to nearly the same degree in 1983 and 1984. Consequently, it seems that the tensions among teachers ultimately led to the demise of transition education at this school and the removal of the significant outcomes previously experienced by a particular group of needy students. This case study, therefore, underlines that in a school change initiative it is important that an attempt be made to minimize jealousy and resentment by, first, devoting considerable attention to communication and, second, taking every precaution to ensure that non-participant teachers are not made to feel that their work is less valued than that of participant teachers.

SUMMARY

The final section of this paper has sought to highlight some significant aspects of projects across states. Of course, there are many other important issues which might have been selected from the accounts provided for highlighting and further discussion in this concluding section. For instance, further consideration might have been given to the anomaly raised in Western Australia that transition students appeared to have little say in decisions about the nature of their transition curricula. Fundamental questions could have been raised about whether the alternative curricula were really ideal for students or whether they just provided a way of avoiding the disruptive behaviour problems that arise when less academically able students are required to follow traditional academic curricula. Attention might have been drawn to the fact that, despite laudable reported gains on social and attitudinal outcomes, the case studies provide little hard data about what transition students learned from their experiences. Though important, these questions and others have not been addressed.

Probably it is unreasonable to expect any review to yield unequivocal answers about program merit: *an evaluative inquiry lights a candle in the darkness, but it never brings dazzling clarity* (Cronbach, Ambron, Dornbusch, Hess, Hornick, Phillips, Walker and Weinder, 1980, p.213). Moreover, in trying to interpret state documentation, the authors were aware of the problems in attributing any observed changes to the transition education programs. In particular, because most educational change studies including the present ones are descriptive rather than experimental, the identification of casual factors is strictly not possible (see Berman, 1981). Consequently, this report leads to few unequivocal conclusions about program merit or causal factors of the kind policy-makers are often looking for.

Nevertheless, the important achievements could not be overlooked. Many projects have shown that it is possible to transform the traditional curriculum and improve student-teacher relationships. As well, it is clear that participant students, who previously had not found school a positive experience, experienced significant gains in self-esteem and satisfaction with school. By demonstrating that schools can offer viable alternative curricula and that students traditionally alienated by schooling can experience success, this review is likely to stimulate other educators to attempt school change.

Yet the base model of "add-on" curriculum must also be questioned as a strategy for curriculum change. While the process catered for the immediate needs of students, it also had the potential to provide for long term disadvantage. Students were cut off from the mainstream curriculum and from acknowledge certification procedures. At the same time entry to the labor market was severely limited. Thus opportunities for future success depended entirely on the quality of the specific programs being offered and their potential to provide students with improved life chances.

In retrospect, more attention should have been paid to the structural implications of curriculum change and this will need to be considered in the future. More appropriate models will need to be chosen so that the whole curriculum can be subjected to scrutiny rather than fragmenting curriculum offerings. It seems essential that as much effort as possible be devoted to assessing the type of curriculum that will be necessary for all students if they are to participate effectively in society and contribute to its development.

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